



Stress Management and Health of Women: Causes and Ways of Coping

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ABSTRACT

In today's competitive world, every women seems to be talking about stress not only in daily conversation, but also through television, radio and newspapers, stress is a universal feature of life and no one can live without experiencing some degree of stress. Right from the beginning of civilization, human organization is subjected to stressful events, and it is self-evident that birth itself is stressful. Stress experience may exert different ages. Almost any unanticipated happening or anticipated event, with full of threat, causes the speeding up of bodily processes. Any kind of excitement is also a stress, in the physiologist's sense of interpretation. The term stress has been derived from technical science where it indicates an excessive and determined over loading of objects. The stress due to lack of freedom at work is as real as the experience of stress due to an interpersonal encounter. Stress is like a fire and is an inescapable part of modern life; it is the physiological and psychological reaction that occurs when an individual perceives an imbalance between the level demand placed upon him and his capability for meeting that demand. Management of stress is a crucial issue for individuals and organizations. Various methods and programmes can help individuals to cope with stress in personal life and in the work environment. The present paper attempts causes, effects and ways of coping from stress in corporate world.

KEYWORDS :

Introduction

The term stress has been derived from technical science where it indicates an excessive and determined over loading of objects. Metals like steel have a certain strain capacity, but on exceeding certain values, fracture occurs. Cannon (1935) related it to homeostatic tendencies in the body. He contributed much to the development of psychosomatic and socio-biological medicine; lot knowledge was occurred about the relation between stress and the development of somatic disorders like cardiovascular diseases. Selye (1956) believed that if sympathetic nervous system and endocrine system are activated in certain way, an individual can said to be under stress. Although stress reaction depends on what an individual considers dangerous or threatening, people very greatly in general vulnerability to stress.

In a study of managerial stress experiences, Shukla (1990) has concluded that it may be more accurate to look at stress as a pattern of inter-related experiences rather than as one single experience. The stress due to lack of freedom at work is as real as the experience of stress due to an interpersonal encounter. For our convenience the paper is divided into following six parts.

Concept and Historical Perspective of Stress

The concept of **stress** of explained in the traditional texts of Indian culture and tradition. The body mind relationship which is the hallmark of modern stress studies was emphasized in the Ayurvedic system of medicine. There are two Sanskrit words '**Klesha**' and '**Dukha**' which approximate modern concept of stress. Selye (1974) beautifully summarized the nature of stress in the following words "every body knows what stress is and yet nobody knows what it is".

The term stress had been used in so many different contexts that there is confusion regarding the exact meaning.

Professor Arnold (1960) "stress is any condition that disturbs normal functioning"

Moorehead and Griffin "A person's adaptive response to a stimulus that places excessive psychological and physical demands on him or her"

Keith Davis defined "Stress is a condition of strain on one's emotions, thought processes and physical condition"

Stress is defined in terms of tolerance, stressful environment which are those that are outside the normal tolerance limit of daily function at extreme level, stimulation might be perceived as a pain"

Stress includes two major aspects –stress and strain. Stressors relates to any factor within the individual or from the external environment

which is conducive to stress. Stressor is also defined as factors which produce stress. Strain is the state of being stressed, and it can be physiological, psychological or behavioural, but it is by definition an indicator of ill health of the individual.

In 1908 Yerkes Dodson law pointed out that, up to a point, arousal increases performance, after it peak, however performance goes down as arousal continue to rise.

Walter Cannon (1932), considered stress to a disturbance of homeostasis under condition of lack of oxygen, cold, heat and the like. Hans Selye coined stress syndrome as General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) and it made up of three stages i.e. stage of Alarm Reaction, stage of Resistance and stage of Exhaustion.

In 1960, Holmes and Rahe noticed that illness seemed to increase during times of rapid personal change. Lazarus and colleagues (1984) has extended the view that minor adjustment may have more negative impact on well being of individual. Maddi and Kobsa found that stress resistant individuals possess a cluster of attitudes and beliefs which they termed as hardiness.

Stress: Its Effects and Causes

The effects of stress can be classified into a) Physical effects and b) Psychological effects.

Prolonged stress, by upsetting body chemistry and other responses, can lever our resistance to disease and illness. It has been estimated that 50% to 70% of all physical illness is at least partly caused by stress. Every one knows today the growing role in stress in heart disease and hypertension leading to sudden death, skin problems and cancer etc.

Stress has been described as the epidemic of the 1990's by the annual report of the world health organization. Stress is the cause of many diseases and medical specialist across the nation confirm the growing number of stressed and confessed young people trying to figure out what is wrong with them. Since stress pushes the blood pressure, even heart beat at elevated blood pressure damages the arteries. Stress related illness includes High blood pressure, Heart disease, Asthma, Diabetes, Arthritis and Stomach ulcers etc. There are other physical problems, such as Headaches, Dizziness and Eczema.

A study by Cooper and Davidson found for higher rates of psychological effects. Anger, Frustration, Sleeplessness, Tension, Irritation, Anxiety, Tiredness, Low self esteem and Depression and dissatisfaction.

Causes of stress

A plenty of things can causes stress. A few of them are as follows.

1. Work overload: either you have got too much to do and to little time to do it in, or job is very difficult and complex.

2. Poor relationship with Bosses and Colleagues: sometimes one feels that the boss is always offhand and no matter how hard you try, you never get any praise.

3. Lack of Autonomy: Having no control over one's job and no participation in decision making that causes for stress.

4. Role Ambition: it means that an individual not clear about what is expected to be achieved in the job, what the boss or colleagues expect and what the scope and responsibility of the jobs is etc.

5. Role Conflict: some times you find yourself caught in between conflicting demands from your boss and subordinates and that can be stressful and some time conflict can arise between you work role and role as family person.

Copying Ways

There are no magic formulas to cope with stress.

Hardiness

It means particular grouping of personality characteristics. It helps people to stave off the damaging effects of stress. These characteristics are commitment, control and challenge. Essentially hard people tend to involve themselves in what's going on, rather than feeling alienated from it.

Optimism

They tend to be more resistant to stress than pessimists, and the evidence is that they tend to use different types of coping strategies. Optimists tend more than pessimists to seek social support.

Humour

People with strong sense humour, who use it as a way of dealing with stressful experiences, are less affected by stress.

Feeling and Control

It's best to try to exert some control over the situation rather than collapsing in a helpless heap. Indeed there is evidence that people who have an internal focus of control, they feel their life is under control.

Stress Management Techniques

Many of literatures are available in bookshop on how to manage stress. The most popular techniques are those which the people can use all the time and which act as a protection against the possibly damaging effects of stressful life they are,

Relaxation

If one can take out some time each day to relax and gather strength to really feel the benefit, the impact of stress will be less on physical and psychological health.

Taking Breaths

It is advisable to give one self breathing space and it does not have to be for long. One can stare out of the window, talk to some one or engage in alternative activities.

Diet and Exercise

One should find a game / at a low level and build up gradually and should aim to do the chosen activity three or four times weekly or at least 20 to 30 minutes vigorously.

Don't let work take over

One of the dangerous tendencies of stressful work is that it can crawl as all over one's private life. People do develop bad habits of taking work home with them.

Negotiating home responsibility

It is necessary to make sure that home duties are fairly distributed and time associated for fun and relaxation.

Time Management

One of the most stressful things in over working lives is the oppressive sensation that we are not on top of things, that there is

never enough time to get every thing only survive by working 12 hours a day.

done, and that one can

Seeing the lights

Sunlight and lots of it: The movements you wake up, draw back the curtains and let those golden shafts steal into your bedroom. And one has to feel the sunshine soaking into every part of the body and feel the incredible sense of well being that brings along.

Cackle like a lion

Laugh hard, laugh softly and laugh as much as you can; nothing banishes stress more effectively than laughing. Keep a comic handy in your desk and share a joke with a friend.

Listening to music

Put on the music of your choice and make a conscious effort to let the lilting strains seep into the brain.

Drinking water

When you are stressed out the body becomes dehydrated and vulnerable to fatigue. Water is the magic elixir that dissipates stress.

Discovering the Yogi in oneself

The yoga has always been a panacea for stress. Going to a yoga teacher and getting started with half hour sessions help in reducing stress.

Talking less and listening more

An old remedy is listening which banishes stress, makes an individual more popular, more knowledgeable and more sensitive.

Streaming the Routine

One needs to cultivate the habit of making a list of items / works and gradually clearing them in order of priority. Time management is stress management.

Dancing

If there no desire for adopting traditional techniques like yoga, meditation and shaking leg vigorously may be an alternative method. It is one of the exercises which help in off loading stress.

Conclusion

Stress is like a fire and is an inescapable part of modern life it is the physiological and psychological reaction that occurs when an individual perceives an imbalance between the level demand placed upon him and his capability for meeting that demand. Stress effect individuals physiological, emotionally and Behaviorally, and it is linked to several health problems, especially heart diseases. Any feeling of being excessively pushed stretched due to external or internal factors, needs to be recognized and causes identified whether it is beneficial or destructive.

Management of stress is a crucial issue for individuals and organizations. Various methods and programmes can help individuals to cope with stress in personal life and in the work environment. Fitness programmes, like yoga, meditation especially helpful in this regard.

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